



A Descriptive Study On Millennial Students' Preferred Learning Strategies At EESP Of Artha Wacana Christian University

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Abstrak

Mahasiswa milenial EESP, berdasarkan hasil studi pendahuluan mengharapkan strategi pembelajaran yang disukai untuk diterapkan oleh para dosen EESP, terutama pada situasi pandemi. Berkaitan dengan hal tersebut, maka dilakukan sebuah penelitian untuk mengetahui strategi pembelajaran yang disukai mahasiswa milenial Prodi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris dengan mengacu pada preferensi belajar pada teori milenial yang dikemukakan oleh Krishnan (2020). Kuesioner disebarkan kepada seratus dua puluh (120) mahasiswa milenial EESP sebagai partisipan penelitian ini, kemudian metode deskriptif kualitatif digunakan untuk menganalisis data yang diperoleh. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa strategi yang disebutkan dalam teori yaitu konten yang disesuaikan berdasarkan preferensi belajar individu, mempelajari konsep baru untuk diterapkan secara praktis pada skenario yang berbeda, pembelajaran lintas fungsi dengan putaran umpan balik yang kuat, preferensi untuk lingkungan belajar non-terstruktur, dan pembelajaran kelompok. untuk mengeksplorasi, terlibat, bertanya dan berprestasi sebagai strategi untuk mendidik mahasiswa milenial yang disukai oleh mahasiswa milenial Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris di Universitas Kristen Artha Wacana. Selain itu, mereka juga lebih menyukai kesempatan belajar berbasis inkuiri, lebih banyak kegiatan yang melibatkan mereka dalam pembelajaran komunikatif, lebih banyak diskusi kelompok, dan lebih banyak materi audio visual. Oleh karena itu, para pendidik EESP dan pendidik non-EESP perlu mempertimbangkan dan menerapkan strategi-strategi yang lebih disukai untuk memenuhi kebutuhan mahasiswa milenial dalam pembelajaran.

Kata Kunci: Mahasiswa Milenial, Strategi Pembelajaran yang Disukai, EESP

Abstract

EESP millennial students, based on the result of the preliminary study, are expecting preferred learning strategies to be applied by the EESP lecturers, especially in pandemic situation. Relating to this, a study conducted to find out the English Education Study Program millennial students' preferred learning strategies by referring to learning preferences on millennial's theory suggested by Krishnan (2020). A questionnaire distributed to 120 millennial students of EESP as the participants of this research, and then the descriptive qualitative method was applied to analyze the data gotten. The result showed that the strategies mentioned in the theory customized content based on individual learning preferences, learn new concepts to practically apply to different scenarios, cross-functional learning with strong feedback loops, preference for non-structured learning environments, and group learning to explore, engage, enquire and achieve as the strategies to teach the millennial students, preferred by the EESP millennial students at Artha Wacana Christian University. Besides, they also prefer more chances to have inquiry-based learning, more activities that engage them in communicative learning, more group discussion, and more audio-visual materials. Therefore, EESP educators and non-EESP educators need to consider and apply those prefer strategies to meet the needs of the millennial students in learning.

Keywords: Millennial Students, Preferred Learning Strategies, EESP

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INTRODUCTION

Ambition, confidence, optimism, technology-based, and a capacity for high-level cooperative work are some of the displays displayed by today's learners or those who are well known as the millennial generation. Howe and Strauss in Alexander (2012) classify the millennial generation as those who were born between 1982 and 2003. They are having many kinds of famous names such as "baby boomers" or "digital natives" who have indicated as impatient generation, experiential learners, multitaskers, and gamers.

Artha Wacana Christian University as one of the higher education institutions in East Nusa Tenggara Province also is educating millennial learners who are studying at this university, which are provided in some departments, including English Education Study Program. The active learners in this department are 480 students. All of those learners of EFL are classified as the millennial generation because all of them were born between 1996 and 2002. The generation is spread out in different semesters and is taught by most of the millennial educators too. In the teaching and learning process, there are various kinds of strategies applied by EFL lecturers. Those kinds of strategies are maximally applied to fulfill the students' needs to understand the materials delivered during the learning process. However, the teaching and learning process is more challenging when the pandemic of covid-19 appears than when the teaching and learning process is done from home. This means that the EFL lecturers need to provide appropriate teaching methods to help the students get a better understanding of the materials they are learning.

Since online learning has applied in March 2020 up to now, there are many complaints about the strategies used by lecturers (also teachers) in delivering the materials. As written in Kompas.com (10th of April 2020), many students get difficulty in trying to understand the materials given by the lecturers because they are having limited capacity to gain more information dealing with the materials. This happened because of the inappropriateness strategies applied by lecturers. Other factors causing this problem are the connectivity, credits of the data, and many more. That is why lecturers need to aware of the preferred learning strategies needed by the students to help them get a better understanding of the materials they are learning.

In education, various kinds of strategies for millennial learners are also suggested by some educational experts to be considered by educators, in this case by the EFL lecturers at EESP of Artha Wacana Christian University. Some of those strategies, as mentioned by Krishnan (2020), based on andragogy principles and millennials' behaviors & attributes, their learning preferences are mainly on customized content based on individual learning preferences, learn new concepts to practically apply to different scenarios, cross-functional learning with strong feedback loops, preference for non-structured learning environments, and group learning to explore, engage, enquire and achieve. Those kinds of learning strategies are considered the most appropriate ways to educate millennial learners.

Some investigators had already done investigations dealing with millennial students' preferred learning strategies or methods. The investigations were done to seek the students' preferred learning strategies or methods in some fields such as follows: (1) First, an investigation done by Debra Hampton, Patricia F. Pearce (2017) who were investigating preferred methods of learning for nursing students in an online degree program in different generations. The purposes of the study were to understand student teaching/learning preferences in online courses to include (a) differences in preferred teaching/learning methods for online nursing students across generations and (b) which teaching strategies students found to be most engaging and effective. The result of the research showed that there are distinct student preferences and generational differences in preferred teaching/learning methods for online students. (2) Second, an investigation was done by Kamal & Radhakrishnan (2019) who were investigating individual learning preferences based on personality traits in an E-learning scenario. The research aimed to find out the relationship between personality traits and learning styles among millennial students in an e-learning scenario. The result showed that the effectiveness of e-learning courses can be improved by providing instruction in a manner consistent with each student's learning

style according to their personality traits. (3) Third, another investigation was done by Garwood (2015) who investigated the millennial students' preferred methods for learning concepts in psychiatric nursing. The purpose of the study was to find out which traditional teaching strategies can engage millennial students and adequately prepare them for the ultimate test of nursing competence: the National Council Licensure Examination. The result showed that the students were exposed to a variety of traditional (e.g., PowerPoint®-guided lectures) and nontraditional (e.g., concept maps, group activities) teaching and learning strategies, and rated their effectiveness.

The investigations above were done toward the nursing millennial students to find out their preferred strategies or methods of learning in different traits, in which, the investigators trait the students based on the relationship between personality traits and learning styles, different generations, and in learning concepts in psychiatric nursing. While in this current study, the writer is more focused on finding out the English Education Study Program millennial students' preferred learning strategies in language learning, especially in pandemic situation which need more attention on the ways lecturers teach.

Based on the preliminary study done by the writer towards 34 millennial students of UKAW dealing with the learning strategies at EESP, the writer found that there were 29 students expecting improvements in learning strategies based on their preferences to help them learn effectively, especially in pandemic situation. This finding fits the statement stated by Manipuspika (2020) that understanding the styles of learning can be very useful for the students to learn in the way they learn best through the activities. It means that there should be any consideration and improvement towards the lecturers' teaching strategies to help them fit the students' needs in learning.

Referring to the finding on the preliminary study above, the writer conducted this research to find out learning strategies preferred by the EFL millennial students of Artha Wacana Christian University, especially in pandemic situation, which never been investigated before by anyone else in language learning in East Nusa Tenggara province. The result of this research is expected to give beneficial information dealing with millennial students' preferred learning strategies, especially in pandemic situation, to both lecturers of Artha Wacana Christian University and non-Artha Wacana Christian University lecturers and educators.

METHOD

In this research, the descriptive qualitative method is used to analyze the data gotten, in which, the writer described the data by using words. The total population of the participants is 480 students which are spread out into four semesters, in which, every semester containing at least three classes which consist of about 30 students in every class for every semester. Thus, the data was taken by the writer from the students of the English Department randomly which spread out into three levels, they are one class of second-semester students, one class from fourth-semester students, and the other class from sixth-semester students. The eight-semester students were not included as the participants because most of them are going to graduate from the university. Therefore, the participants (as the samples) taken were 120 students and were taken by using the stratified random sampling technique. The instrument used in this research was a questionnaire (in google form). The questionnaire was used to find out the data dealing with the learning strategies preferred by the EFL learners of Artha Wacana Christian University. In gathering the data, there were some procedures done by the writer, as follows: (1) Designing the questionnaire, (2) Distributing the questionnaire to the participants through a google form, (3) Collecting the submission forms, (4) Describing the data gotten, and (5) Reporting the result. In analyzing the data, the writer applied descriptive qualitative technique, in which, the data gotten described by using words. Therefore, the writer analyzed the data gotten by using narrative techniques to find out the millennial learners' preferred learning strategies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the questionnaire distributed, there were five (5) questions to be answered by every participant (120 participants) to find out the data dealing with millennial students' preferred learning strategies such as suggested by Krishnan (2020). Those learning strategies are customized content based on individual learning preferences, learn new concepts to practically apply to different scenarios, cross-functional learning with strong feedback loops, preference for non-structured learning environments, and group learning to explore, engage, enquire and achieve. The questions of the questionnaire are: (1) Is interactive technology used in classes? If so, what form(s) does this interactive technology use take?; this question is provided to gain information dealing with content-based learning mentioned in the theory. (2) Are students provided with feedback from the lecturers? What form(s) does this feedback take?; this question also is provided to gain information dealing with cross-functional learning. To get more information dealing with cross-functional learning, the following question also is provided: (3) Is peer evaluation included? How is it applied within the class?; (4) Are team projects used? If so, how?; this question is also distributed to the students to help the writer gains information dealing with group learning to explore, engage, enquire, and achieved as mentioned in the theory. The last question is (5) what kind of learning strategy do you prefer to have? The information from the answer to this question is needed by the writer to provide information dealing with the students' preference for a non-structured learning environment and, of course, to gain more information dealing with learning strategies that they prefer to have in their learning process. After collecting the questionnaires from the respondents, the results elaborated as follows:

Customized Content Based on Individual Learning Preferences. The question provided to gain information dealing with content-based learning is: "Is interactive technology used in classes? If so, what form(s) does this interactive technology use take?" 120 participants gave their responses to this question, in which, 119 of the participants said yes to the use of interactive technology in classes, while one of them said no. Further, the 119 respondents mentioned some forms of interactive technology usually used in the classes, such as the use of smart-phone, laptop, projector, and audio tools. Those kinds of technology were used to operate some applications needed during the learning process such as WhatsApp, zoom, google classroom, jitsi-meet, e-learning, and PowerPoint. Besides, they also used those tools to play audio and video, also to search some e-books and some information through google websites.

Learn New Concepts to Practically Apply to Different Scenario. To gain information dealing with conceptual learning, the writer provides a question as follows: "what kind of learning strategy do you prefer to have?" There were various kinds of responses delivered by the respondents dealing with this question. The respondents suggesting five (5) learning strategies preferred by them and needed to be considered or even developed by the lecturers. Those learning strategies are inquiry-based instruction (97 respondents), conceptual teaching and learning (72 respondents), communicative approach (79 respondents), more group discussion (42 respondents), and audio-visual materials (103 respondents). They assumed that those kinds of learning strategies would be effectively motivating and encourage them to study and to enjoy every process of learning. The same data also used to provide information dealing with Preference for Non-Structured Learning Environment as mentioned in the theory.

Cross-Functional Learning with Strong Feedback Loops. The questions provided to gain information dealing with cross-functional learning are as follows: "Are students provided with feedback from the lecturers? What form(s) does this feedback take?" and "Is peer evaluation included? How is it applied within the class?" In the question, 120 participants gave their responses about feedbacks provided by lecturers. All participants said yes. They said that the feedback given by the lecturers is in the forms of appreciation, coaching, and evaluation. The appreciation was given when they correctly answered the questions given by the lecturers and when they did something right dealing with their learning processes. Coaching was given when they gave an incorrect answer or when they did something wrong. While evaluation was given when

they have assignments that needed to be evaluated (to be ranked or rated). While in the second question, there were 115 responses out of 120 respondents who said peer evaluation was included during their learning processes, while 5 others said they never got any peer evaluation moment during their learning processes. Those who answered yes stated that the peer evaluation applied through group discussion sessions and when they were checking some assignments.

Group Learning to explore, Engage, Enquire, and Achieve. A question relating to group work is provided as follows: "Are team projects used? If so, how?" For this question, there was 114 respondents response that they have ever done this kind of activity, which means, team projects used during their learning processes, while 6 others said they never did this kind of activity. When having team projects, the participants said that they did them through quizzes, assignments, and presentations.

Seeing the result above, the writer would like to discuss some important points relating to millennial students' preferred learning strategies at EESP of Artha Wacana Christian University based on the education strategies for millennial learners' theory to meet their needs in learning which elaborated by Krishnan (2020), as follows:

Customized Content Based on Individual Learning Preferences. Bula Villalobos (2014) writes that content-based instruction refers to an approach to second language teaching in which teaching is organized around the content or information that students will acquire, rather than around a linguistic or another type of syllabus. Content is closely related to the students' needs and instructional settings. Further, Omoto & Nyongesa (2013) argued that the lesson content-based could be reference books, audio or video of lesson/lectures, or even real people. Besides, the use of technology in the process of learning also gives a good impact on the students' achievements (Wahyugi, 2021). Relating to those arguments, the use of technology as one of the characteristics of millennial learners becomes important to discuss dealing with content-based learning itself. Based on the investigation toward EFL millennial students' preferred learning strategies done by the writer, the result shows that the use of digital technologies and active instruction applied in EFL millennial students' learning classes. This statement is supported by 120 responses given by the respondents relating to the use of interactive technology, in which, all of them argue that the application of the interactive technology was applied through a form of electronic for supporting the learning. Laptop, LCD, smartphone, and audio recorder were used to operate some applications such as WhatsApp, zoom, google classroom, jitsi, e-learning, and PowerPoint. Besides, they also used those tools to play audio and video, and also to search some e-books and some information through google websites.

Learn New Concepts to Practically Apply to Different Scenario. Conceptual learning is a process in which learners organize concept-relevant knowledge, skills, and attitudes to form logical cognitive connections resulting in assimilation, storage, retrieval, and transfer of concepts to applicable situations, familiar and unfamiliar (Fletcher et al., 2019). Further, (Hoffman & Grady, 2013) continues that all learning can be reduced to skill learning, problem solving, or concept learning. Concept learning is dependent upon the ability to abstract, generalize, categorize, and establish relationships between symbols and referents. Based on the result of this study, 72 respondents argued that conceptual learning enables them to draw from what they have learned and use it to grasp new topics. Besides, this kind of learning strategy also will help them to apply their knowledge in today's competitive environment.

Cross-Functional Learning with Strong Feedback Loops. A cross-functional team is usually established from the decision of top management. In this form of group work approach, individual members are asked to combine their expertise, knowledge, and insight as one entity to identify the challenges confronting the working operation of the organization so that an action can be implemented to assure that the goal and objectives can be attained (Phoewhawm, 2017). Based on the result of the questionnaire, the writer found that all of the participants said that they got some kinds of feedbacks during their learning process. Those feedbacks were given in the forms of appreciation, coaching, and evaluation. The appreciation was given

when they correctly answered the questions given by the lecturers and when they did something right dealing with their learning processes. Coaching was given when they gave an incorrect answer or when they did something wrong. While evaluation is given when they have assignments that needed to be evaluated (to be ranked or rated).

Preference for Non-Structured Learning Environment. Unstructured play is thought to contribute to how children develop not only socially and academically but also creatively. It is during this time that children learn how to work together, adapt to different situations, experiment, explore, construct meaning, begin to learn what they like, what they are good at, and how to express their individuality (Thiessen et al., 2013). The result of questionnaire number five (5) also found non-structured learning as one of the strategies preferred by the millennial students, in this case, the chance to develop socially and academically, or in other words, can be said as inquiry-based learning. 79 respondents argued that this strategy allows feeling free in acquiring knowledge also in expressing their ideas, feelings, and desires.

Group Learning to explore, Engage, Enquire, and Achieve. Group work is a generic term covering a multiplicity of techniques in which two or more students are assigned a task that involves collaboration and self-initiated language (Karim, 2015). Further, (Ananda, 2019) stated that a professional teacher should be able to solve learning problems faced by the students by applying some approaches relating to social values such as group work, responsibility, and hand-in-hand in doing the tasks. The importance of group work based on the statements above leads the writer to find out the responses of the millennial students relating to this case. The result of the questionnaire shows that group work is also provided by the EFL lecturers at classes in the forms of quizzes, assignments, and group presentations. This means that group work also available during the teaching and learning processes, which implicitly tells that the millennial students' need in strengthening their connectivity has been fulfilled by the EFL lecturers.

Relating to the result of this study, the writer expects that it will give beneficial information and valuable contribution to EESP educators and non-EESP educators to meet the needs of the millennial students in learning based on what they prefer to have as millennial generations. In line with the previous researches, the findings of this study fit the theory of millennial preferred learning strategy stated by Krishnan (2020). Besides, the additional preference strategies suggested by the millennial students such as more chances to have inquiry-based learning, more activities that engage them in communicative learning, more group discussion, and more audio-visual materials also need to be considered by the educators to provide appropriate teaching strategies to help the millennial generations get a better understanding in learning. The findings of this study also still need to be enriched in the next investigation to provide more information dealing with EESP educators' responses towards those suggested preferences strategies and how will they apply them.

CONCLUSION

In accordance with the previous research, the result of this study showed that EESP millennial students of UKAW prefer more chances to have inquiry-based learning, more activities that engage them in communicative learning, more group discussion, and more audio-visual materials in the process of their learning. Therefore, EESP educators and non-EESP educators need to consider and apply those prefer strategies to meet the needs of the millennial students in learning.

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